(c) if the restrictions faced by existing PSUs such as marketing in hilly region and rural areas and dealers are not appointed on commercial considerations etc. will be applicable to private players also;

(d) if not, how the PSUs will face competition from private players in the absence of level playing field; and

(e) what action Government propose to take in this regard to ensure level playing field?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (e) Private sector is marketing permitted decontrolled products and those products which are allowed under Parallel Marketing Scheme (PMS). The public sector oil companies have undertaken number of steps to meet the competition from private oil company and to secure their marketing interest in the retail sector such as:—

(i) Upgrading facilities of retail outlets.

(ii) Improve customer service at retail outlets/LPG distributorship etc.

(iii) Value addition at retail outlet by entering into strategic tie ups.

LPG agencies and petrol pumps in Meghalaya

1627. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the locations in Meghalaya where LPG dealership and petrol pumps have been allotted during the last five years;

(b) the time by which more LPG dealership and petrol pumps in the State are likely to be set up; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) During the last 5 years (1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99) oil companies have allotted 5 retail outlet dealerships and 2 LPG distributorships in Meghalaya.

(b) and (c) In addition to the locations pending from previous Marketing Plans 2 retail outlet dealerships and 8 LPG distributorships have been included in the current Marketing Plan 1996—98 for Meghalaya.